



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO PRODUCE AND CONSUME RESPONSIBLY?

Responsible production consists of increasing the quality of products and services whilst reducing the resources that are used in the process. Responsible consumption means consuming less and ensuring that whatever is consumed is done so as sustainably and supportively as possible. It is a way of increasing competitiveness by avoiding waste, by improving the living conditions of producers, and by reducing poverty.

Responsible production and consumption promote an efficient use of resources and energy, the construction of environmentally-friendly infrastructures, improved access to

basic services, and the creation of ecological, fairly paid jobs with decent labour terms.

Different agents are involved in this process, including companies, politicians, traders and consumers. Responsible consumers who support sustainable production are those that consider what they really need, and whether or not their purchase is essential before making it. These people **make critical and ethical purchases, weighing up the economic, social and ecological conditions whereby which a product or service has been created.** Responsible consumers are aware that **buying something is not just about meeting a need or wish, but that**



it also triggers a whole series of economic, social and environmental processes.

In this respect, the concept of Fair Trade is fundamental to ensuring that the production and consumption process is undertaken responsibly. The internationally accepted definition, outlined by the World Fair Trade Organisation (WFTO), establishes that “Fair Trade is a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect, that seeks greater equity in international trade. It pays particular attention to social and environmental criteria. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalised producers and workers, especially in the South”¹.

A LEVEL OF LIFE IN HARMONY WITH THE ENVIRONMENT

At the 1992 Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro, the United Nations (UN) spoke of the need to “promote consumption and production patterns that reduce pressure on the environment” and at the same time “meet the basic needs of humanity”.

Twenty years later, at the Rio+20 Summit, the UN reiterated that “promoting sustainable

consumption and production patterns is one of the three general objectives and essential requisites for sustainable development...”.

On a European level, in order to promote new patterns of responsible consumption and production, Articles 191 to 193 of the European Union Functioning Treaty call for the **creation of policies that protect the environment and contribute to “the cautious and rational use of natural resources”**. Measures that simultaneously ensure that the basic needs of producers and consumers are met, and that both enjoy a decent standard of living that guarantees their dignity. In short, these measures contribute towards **making Article 25.1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights a reality whilst protecting the environment**.

However, the current consumption model does not guarantee the quality of life of producers, or the protection of the environment, but rather generates major socio-economic imbalances. For this reason, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12 aims to guarantee responsible production and consumption patterns between now and 2030.



¹ *What is Fair Trade? The 10 international principles. World Fair Trade Organisation.*



THE POWER OF RESPONSIBLE AND UNITED CITIZENS

SDG 12 poses one of the greatest challenges within Agenda 2030: **generating a change in global citizen attitudes. These citizens will realise that the current consumer model is not sustainable and seek to transform their purchases into opportunities to defend a series of ecological, social and human values.**

As such, for example, target 12.3 calls directly upon consumers to halve *per capita* global food waste. Target 12.5 aims to substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reusing activities. In order to achieve all of this, people must be able to access all the information necessary about how to adopt lifestyles in harmony with nature (target 12.8).

If citizens in general consume ethically, critically and ecologically, they will pressure companies and governments into adopting sustainable practices (target 12.6), and into rejecting any irresponsible production models.

In this respect, it is vital that governments and companies commit to both achieving sustainable management and to using natural resources efficiently (target 12.2).

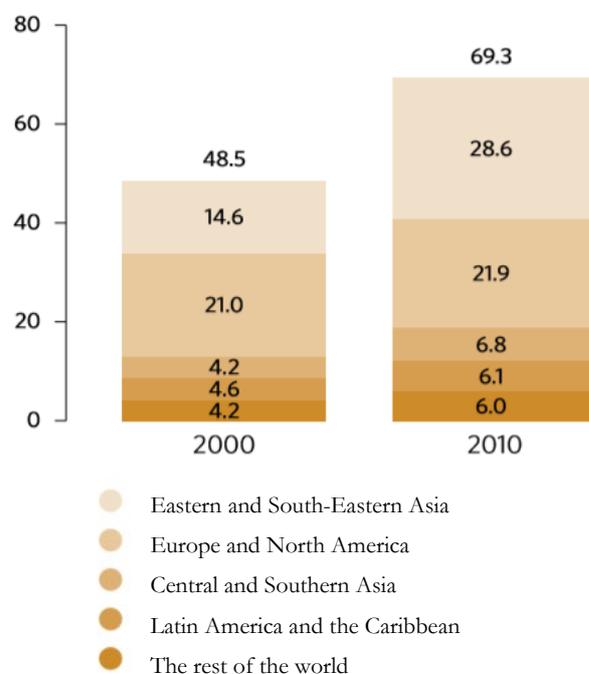
The term “material footprint” refers to the amount of raw materials extracted globally used to meet the national end consumer

demands in a country.

The high volume of raw materials used globally to meet these consumption needs, generated by the current model, is deeply worrying. **Globally, the material footprint rose from 48.5 billion metric tons in 2000, to 69.3 billion metric tons in 2010.**

The material footprint per capita increased in almost all the regions, meaning that the world now “needs” (or has been made to need) more raw materials to meet individual consumer requirement.

Graph I. Material footprint, 2000-2010 (million tons). The colours correspond to the regions. Source: SDG Report 2017, UN.





WHO CAN DO WHAT?

ON AN INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL



Target 12.1 establishes that all countries must apply the 10-year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (10YFP).

The 10YFP is a global action framework conceived to promote international cooperation in the drive towards speeding up the shift into responsible production and consumption in both Northern and Southern countries. The adopted text of the 10YFP (A/CONF.216/5) includes an open and indicative list of programmes focusing mainly on: (1) Consumer information; (2) Sustainable lifestyles and education; (3) Sustainable public purchases; (4) Sustainable building and construction; and (5) Sustainable tourism, including ecotourism.

ON A LOCAL LEVEL



Fairtrade is the most internationally recognised institution that ensures that the products carrying its seal respect the natural environment and the rights of the people involved in the production and commercialisation process. Discover the local work of Fairtrade Ibérica in an interview with its Director in the [FABRE SDG 12 Testimony](#).

AND WHAT CAN YOU DO?



“Every time you teach, also teach to doubt what you teach”. José Ortega y Gasset

Infant and Primary Pupils

Your pupils can work on the Three Rs: reducing, reusing and recycling. Each child could bring materials to school that they no longer use (fabric, t-shirts, old bits of cloth, etc.) to make fabric pompoms as suggested by the [Madre Coraje Association](#). To find out how to make them, follow the instructions on [this video](#). With younger pupils you could hold an awareness session about responsible consumption, with the story of [Cuidadín and Gastón](#).



Secondary and Baccalaureate Students

Do your students know where the clothes they are wearing have come from? Have they ever wondered who made their t-shirts and their working conditions? Sitting in a circle, each student could look at the garment label of the person next to them. Observe where the clothes they are wearing have come from and locate them on the map. Each group, either by country or continent, should study the reasons why these locations produce more, despite them theoretically still being in development. **Next, suggest issues such as exploitation, poor working conditions or child labour.** You could look at the work done by NGOs that promote responsible consumption, such as the Madre Coraje Association.

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